



Recovery Takes Time

Traumatic events are usually unexpected and can have a big impact on your emotional and physical health. Most people will recover from a disaster or emergency over time.

Coping with stress after a disaster can affect your physical health. You might have more headaches, stomach problems, colds, or allergies than normal.

Stress can also make chronic health problems that you have (e.g., heart problems, high blood pressure) worse or harder to manage.

When talking to your doctor or other healthcare provider, let him or her know you have been through a traumatic event and if there have been changes in your health.

Take Care of Yourself

There are many things you can do (or keep doing) to help you cope and recover from what you have been through:

- eat nutritious food
- stay hydrated with water
- be active every day
- get enough rest and sleep

Remember, the things that can help you stay physically well can also help your emotional wellness.



Recovery After a Disaster or Emergency

If you or someone you know needs support, call:
 Health Link Alberta
 Toll Free: 1-866-408-LINK (5465)
 Calgary: 403-943-LINK
 Edmonton: 780-408-LINK

For information on how to request additional copies of this resource email:
 HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@albertahealthservices.ca
 Alberta Health Services
 Mental Health Screening & Early Identification
 10101 Southport Road S.W.
 Calgary, AB T2W 3N2

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C.A.L.M. Method for Self-Care

Connect. Your family, friends and community may have activities that bring you together to share memories. Find ways to help others when you can and accept help from others when you need it. Connecting with others helps build hope and reminds you that you are not alone.

Accept what has changed. Making sense and meaning out of a disaster can be hard. In the first year after a disaster, it is common for certain events (e.g., birthdays, holidays, change of season) to remind you what has changed or what you have lost. Part of recovery and healing is to recognize these times and to know it's okay to grieve.

Look for the positive. After a traumatic event, it can be hard to see things in a positive light. Making time for activities that you enjoy is important. Socialize or take part in spiritual activities, hobbies, or spend time in nature. Positive experiences can help you recover. When you feel positive emotions like appreciation or gratitude, your body produces chemicals and hormones that are good for you. This can help keep you physically and emotionally healthy.

Manage stress. Some stress is expected after a disaster. Creating a routine that includes healthy activities you did before the event is a needed step to recover. Build in stress-reducing activities like walking or yoga. Physical activity can help reduce tension and help your body produce chemicals and hormones that help you cope better.

For some people, the signs of stress after a traumatic event do not appear until weeks or months after the event has happened.

Warning signs that you are not coping well include:

- thinking about the disaster or traumatic event all the time
- having flashbacks to the event
- a change in your sleep pattern (sleeping less or more; waking-up through the night, having nightmares or not sleeping at all)
- avoiding people or activities that you usually enjoy
- using alcohol or drugs more
- having thoughts about harming yourself or suicide
- changes in appetite (eating more or less than usual)
- feeling hopeless
- feeling worried or frustrated more than usual

Alcohol, drugs, or gambling might seem like a quick way to feel good again, but using these ways to cope can lead to bigger problems. Ask for help to find better ways to cope before it becomes a problem. Even if you had challenges coping before the event, you can still learn new healthier ways to cope. It is important to use your supports and be patient.

Talk to a trusted friend, counsellor, or support person if you:

- have emotional reactions that are getting in the way of relationships, work, or other important activities
- have other people telling you they are worried about how you are doing or feeling

